WHO and MPP announce agreement with NIH for COVID-19 health technologies

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Geneva – WHO's COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) and the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) today finalised a licensing agreement with the United States National Institutes of Health (NIH) for the development of several innovative therapeutics, early-stage vaccines and diagnostic tools for COVID-19.

The licences, which are transparent, global and non-exclusive, will allow manufacturers from around the world to work with MPP and C-TAP to make these technologies accessible to people living in low- and middle-income countries and help put an end to the pandemic.

The 11 COVID-19 technologies offered under two licences include the stabilised spike protein used in currently available COVID-19 vaccines, research tools for vaccine, therapeutic and diagnostic development as well as early-stage vaccine candidates and diagnostics. The full list of the NIH COVID-19 technologies covered in the agreement is here.

"I welcome the generous contribution NIH has made to C-TAP and its example of solidarity and sharing," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "Whether it's today's pandemic or tomorrow's health emergency, it's through sharing and empowering lower-income countries to manufacture their own health tools that we can ensure a healthier future for everyone."

"We are honoured to sign these public health-driven licence agreements with NIH under the auspices of C-TAP with the goal of providing equitable access to life-saving health products for the most vulnerable in the world," said Charles Gore, MPP Executive Director.

"NIH were the first to share their patents with MPP for an HIV product back in 2010 when we were created, and we are delighted to continue strengthening our partnership."

The announcement was made today by the US Government at the second Global COVID-19 Summit, co-hosted by the United States, Belize, Germany, Indonesia and Senegal.

Licensing the NIH technologies to MPP under the auspices of C-TAP will allow greater access to these technologies and hopefully lead to the development of commercial products that can address current and future public health needs. In most circumstances, NIH will not collect royalties on sales of products licensed in 49 countries classified by the United Nations as Least Developed Countries.

Launched in 2020 by the WHO Director-General and the President of Costa Rica, and supported by 43 Member States, C-TAP aims to facilitate timely, equitable and affordable access to COVID-19 health products by boosting their production and supply through open, transparent and non-exclusive licensing agreements. MPP provides the licensing expertise to this initiative and holds the licences.

The 11 technologies include:

1. Prefusion spike proteins (Vaccine Development)
2. Structure-Based Design of Spike Immunogens (Research Tool for Vaccine Development)
3. Pseudotyping Plasmid (Research Tool for Vaccine Development)
4. ACE2 Dimer construct (Research Tool for Drug Development)
5. Synthetic humanized llama nanobody library and related use Research Tool for Drug and Diagnostic Development)
6. Newcastle Disease Virus-Like Particles Displaying Prefusion-Stabilized Spikes (Vaccine Candidate)
7. Parainfluenza virus 3 based vaccine (Vaccine Candidate)
8. A VSV-EBOV-Based Vaccine (Vaccine Candidate)
9. RNASEH-Assisted Detection Assay for RNA (Diagnostic)
10. Detection of SARS-CoV-2 and other RNA Virus (Diagnostic)
11. High-Throughput Diagnostic Test (Diagnostic)

Access the licence agreements

Media contact

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About C-TAP

Launched in 2020 by the WHO Director-General and the President of Costa Rica, and supported by 44 Member States, C-TAP aims to facilitate timely, equitable and affordable access to COVID-19 health products by boosting their production and supply through open, non-exclusive licensing agreements. The C-TAP platform provides a global one-stop-shop for developers of COVID-19 therapeutics, diagnostics, vaccines and other priority health technologies to share knowledge and data and license their intellectual property to additional manufacturers through public health-driven, voluntary, non-exclusive and transparent licences. By pooling technologies, developers of COVID-19 health products can boost manufacturing capacity in all regions and expand access to life-saving tools.

About MPP

The Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) is a United Nations-backed public health organisation working to increase access to, and facilitate the development of, life-saving medicines for low- and middle-income countries. Through its innovative business model, MPP partners with civil society, governments, international organisations, industry, patient groups, and other stakeholders to prioritise and license needed medicines and pool intellectual property to encourage generic manufacture and the development of new formulations. To date, MPP has signed agreements with 15 patent holders for thirteen HIV antiretrovirals, one HIV technology platform, three hepatitis C direct-acting antivirals, a tuberculosis treatment, a long-acting technology, two experimental oral antiviral treatments for COVID-19 and 12 COVID-19 technologies. MPP was founded by Unitaid, which continues to be MPP's main funder. MPP's work on access to essential medicines is also funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). MPP's activities in COVID-19

are undertaken with the financial support of the Japanese Government, the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and SDC.